

Rural Chesapeake Bay and Seaside of Virginia Working Waterfront Master Plan Implementation



Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program

Northern Neck Planning District Commission

Accomack-Norhampton Planning District Commission

Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission

NOAA Grant: NA18NOS4190152

Grant Year 2018 Task 93.05

This project was funded by the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program at the Department of Environmental Quality through Grant # NA18NOS4190152 of the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended.

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October 29, 2020

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NOAA Grant No. NA18NOS4190152

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On the cover – Photograph taken by John Bateman of the NNPDC in the summer of 2017 on Totuskey Creek in Richmond County. The former working waterfront is an old granary used to load grain onto barges for transport to market. Waterways in rural coastal Virginia which were historically used to transport goods vital to the local economy are now more frequently used to support vital commercial and recreational fishing activities.

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Introduction

The Northern Neck Planning District Commission (NNPDC) was founded in 1969 and is a voluntary association of local governing bodies, including members representing the Counties of Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland. The NNPDC endeavors to address local issues and to solve problems with regional significance and impact through mutual cooperation. These regional issues cannot be solved efficiently by each county alone.

The Northern Neck of Virginia is a peninsula bounded by the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers and the Chesapeake Bay that is coastal in nature and largely rural. The Northern Neck shares many cultural and economic similarities with its neighboring regions, the Middle Peninsula and the Eastern Shore. The Planning District Commissions serving these regions have actively participated in efforts to raise awareness about and to protect our culturally and economically imperative working waterfront areas. These Planning District Commissions, along with the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, inventoried these assets and actively participated in the development of the 2016 [Virginia Working Waterfront Master Plan](#).

Summary

This project expanded upon and complemented the current Working Waterfront 309 strategy through the development of tools that promote and help ensure the sustainability of working waterfronts and related industries. These industries include, but are not limited to, local watermen/women, aquaculture, oyster hatcheries, marinas, boatbuilding, marine diesel repair, eco-tour guides and charter operations. This project was intended to continue the knowledge gained, benefits accrued, and new policy success achieved under previous grants from the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program (VCZMP). This is a continuing collaboration of the Rural Chesapeake Bay-Seaside Working Waterfront Coalition, consisting of the Northern Neck Planning District Commission (NNPDC), Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC), and the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission (MPPDC) and which received additional support from VCZMP staff. Research over the last decade, much of which was made possible by VCZMP, has pointed to the need to preserve and

enhance working waterfronts in order to preserve the economic diversity, vitality, and the unique culture of our coastal communities. The goal of this year's effort was to generate economic sustainability through the creation of outreach and educational tools that highlight new state-level policies that the initiative has achieved thus far and promote continued adoption of local-level policy supporting Virginia's working waterfronts and the coastal regions' assets.

Efforts under previous grants in the Working Waterfront 309 strategy from the VCZMP helped to implement the recommendations of the 2016 [Working Waterfront Master Plan](#). The last three General Assembly sessions resulted in considerable policy progress by state legislators working to strengthen working waterfronts across the Commonwealth. During the 2016, 2017, and 2018 General Assembly sessions, a comprehensive suite of coastal focused legislative bills were submitted and approved targeting key issues important to working waterfronts. These bills addressed waterfront property tax exemption, living shorelines, dredging, expediting dredge spoil permitting, storm water management, and waterway maintenance.

In the third year of the Working Waterfront 309 strategy, this project built upon the successful implementation of the recommended actions identified in the 2016 [Working Waterfronts Master Plan](#) by implementing the recommended Private Sector actions toward adoption of recommended local government level policies. Specifically, this project worked to “educate community leaders and the public on the importance of our working waterfronts to our economy and our culture,” as recommended in the 2016 [Working Waterfronts Master Plan](#). Education and outreach were achieved through the creation of two digital products that showcase working waterfronts in coastal Virginia as well as the Virginia Working Waterfronts Master Plan. These ready-made materials were widely disseminated and integrated on local and regional websites in addition to the Virginia Coastal Geospatial and Educational Mapping System.

This project utilized an integrated approach to marketing the benefits of working waterfronts to communities and messaging to localities, the public, and the business community. The

project saw the development of StoryMaps showcasing examples of working waterfront industries in all three regions, showing just how prevalent and important these industries are to Coastal Virginia. The project also saw the production of an outreach film showcasing local working waterfront businesses in all three regions and telling the stories of workers, residents, and resource managers. Finally, the project saw the coordinated distribution of these products at a time when waterfront fishing industries were being severely impacted by poor harvests due to record rainfall and the Covid-19 pandemic. The products created will continue to promote healthy working waterfronts that model sustainability and encourage both environmental protection and economic growth.

Products and Outcomes

The following sections describe the activities completed during this grant year and their current and anticipated outcomes. Individual products are provided within this report and this report can be requested from the NNPDC.

Development of Working Waterfront StoryMaps for the Coastal Region

VACZM staff (through Task 1.04), in collaboration with each of the participating Planning District Commissions, developed StoryMaps detailing the locations and stories of selected working waterfronts in each of the three regions. Utilizing Working Waterfront Site Data developed through previous VCZMP efforts, each of the three regions selected representative working waterfront locations to be featured and provided narrative content, featured photos, and unique mapping themes for each business. Businesses showcased represented a cross-section of working waterfront industries prevalent in each region including, local watermen/women, aquaculture, oyster hatcheries, marinas, seafood processing facilities, boatbuilding, marine diesel repair, eco-tour guides and charter operations, and aerospace facilities. Narrative content was developed to include the cultural, historical, and economic significance of each industry to the coastal region. Featured photos and unique mapping themes were used to highlight the prevalence of working waterfront industries in all three regions and underscore the need for the preservation of working waterfront areas.

The StoryMaps are housed on the Virginia Coastal Geospatial and Educational Mapping System (GEMS) and linked to by the participating PDCs, regional tourism and economic development organizations, and other partner organizations with the goal of drawing attention to working waterfronts, showcase waterfront heritage, and promote local businesses that greatly contribute to the local economy. The StoryMaps are a compelling online tool that will educate the public, inform visitors, and encourage public officials to adopt policy that will support working waterfront businesses. The StoryMaps are intended to be a living product that can showcase other working waterfronts in the three regions and increased exposure will help to sustain and grow these economically vital businesses by informing decision-makers as well as the public of the need for local policies that directly support working waterfronts.

Development of an Outreach Video on Working Waterfronts of the Coastal Region

Staff from the participating PDC's and the VCZMP collaborated on an outreach film to capture the most important working waterfront stories of the coastal region. NNPDC staff selected from a list of qualified media companies and selected Lot 7 Media to film and produce a high-quality video suitable for online distribution. NNPDC staff then worked in collaboration with participating PDC's to determine which working waterfront industries best represented the coastal region. Selected industries included businesses that emphasized 'best practices' in operating a viable water-based business in concert with the sensitive environment of the coastal region.

NNPDC staff and participating PDC's submitted potential film locations and interviewees from representative working waterfront businesses, residents, and resource managers to be featured in the video. NNPDC staff collaborated with Lot 7 Media and participating PDC's to evaluate potential film locations and interviewees to develop a two-day shoot schedule. NNPDC staff worked closely with Lot 7 Media to develop poignant questions and scripting that helped guide filming and interviews for video shoot days. NNPDC staff invited

participating PDCs and VACZM staff to attend on shoot days for the purpose of guiding content during filming and interviews.

Lot 7 Media, NNPDC and VACZM staff conducted filming over the course of the two-day shoot schedule at ten locations throughout the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. Locations were chosen that represented the coastal region that could also be visited within the two-day shoot schedule. Eleven interviews were conducted at those locations over the course of the two-day schedule and were chosen based on locational relevance and the ability of the interviewee to travel.

Lot 7 Media then compiled the filmed segments and developed interview transcripts and worked collaboratively with NNPDC staff to generate a working script which was distributed, along with a proof of concept, to partners for review and comment. Participating PDC's and VCZMP staff provided comments and recommendations on the working script and proof of concept to further hone the narrative content. Recommendations were used by Lot 7 Media to develop a rough cut of the finished product which was distributed to partners for review and feedback. The feedback provided was used to create subsequent fine and final cuts of the film, all of which were reviewed, commented upon, and approved by participating partners.

The final cut of the film was intentionally developed to inform the public about the importance of working waterfronts to the regional economies and how local governments and the public can participate in supporting their continuity. The film incorporates information about the investment that the VCZMP has made through its working waterfronts initiative and highlights the successes in implementing the [Working Waterfronts Master Plan](#). Beyond the life of this grant, the film will be promoted to a broader audience outside of Coastal Virginia aimed at sustainable eco-tourism centered around the three regions' working waterfronts.

Development of a Teaser Video on Working Waterfronts of the Coastal Region

In preparation for the release of the Working Waterfronts Film, the participating partners concluded that greater enthusiasm and anticipation could be generated in advance of the release with a 30-second “Teaser” Video. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in heavy losses for many Working Waterfront businesses throughout Coastal Virginia. In response, the participating partners concluded that a Teaser Video could have the additional benefit of serving as a call to action in support of these hard-hit businesses. With the approval of the VCZMP and additional funding secured through Grant #NA18NOS4190152 (via a budget amendment to transfer \$2,650 of the total \$4,650 returned by the Northern Virginia Regional Commission’s FY18 Task 83, allowable under CZM’s 10% authority), the NNPDC contracted with the Working Waterfront Film creator, Lot 7 Media, to create a Teaser Video.

NNPDC staff and participating PDC’s collaborated with Lot 7 Media to use existing filmed material to develop a condensed video that highlighted the impacted businesses and emphasized the economic importance of those industries. The Teaser Video was created and widely disseminated across communication platforms, including social media, by each participating PDC (see next section). The resulting enthusiasm and anticipation had a significantly positive impact on the dissemination of the Working Waterfront Film, resulting in greater and more widely dispersed publicity. The Teaser Video was an integral component of the release strategy that will have lasting benefits to the Rural Chesapeake Bay-Seaside Working Waterfront Coalition efforts and will serve as an avenue to direct interested parties to the work of the Coalition, the VCZMP, and the [Working Waterfronts Master Plan](#).

Dissemination of StoryMaps and Videos

NNPDC staff and participating partners developed a strategy for a coordinated dissemination campaign to roll-out the Working Waterfront Teaser, Film and StoryMaps in an effort to generate as much publicity as possible. Participating PDCs collaborated with VCZMP, the Virginia Tourism Corporation, and the Virginia Oyster Trail to distribute and disseminate the

Working Waterfront Teaser, Film and StoryMaps through unified coordination with localities, institutional partners, environmental and other interested nonprofits, tourism and economic development organizations, and local businesses in their respective regions. Participating PDCs coordinated the dissemination of the Teaser across communication platforms, including social media, in each of their respective regions in the week prior to the release of the Film. NNPDC staff, in coordination with participating PDC's and the VCZMP, developed a press release and through a coordinated campaign it was widely distributed it to media outlets in conjunction with the Film's debut. The highly anticipated Film was distributed across communication platforms for participating PDC's, tourism commissions, economic development organizations, localities, and other institutional and nonprofit partners. Links to webpage and social media posts are available below.

The coordinated dissemination campaign saw the products widely distributed and was a resounding success. Evidence of the Film's wide dissemination is available through metrics obtained from media platforms where it was posted, and those metrics show the Film continues to gain traction. Participating PDC's that make up the Rural Chesapeake Bay-Seaside Working Waterfront Coalition will continue to support the widespread dissemination of these products far beyond the coastal region to generate support for working waterfront issues and to drive local and state policy adoption to promote working waterfronts.

StoryMaps

The Working Waterfronts StoryMap for each Coastal Region can be found via the links below.

Northern Neck: <https://arcg.is/0KCqXT>

Eastern Shore: <https://arcg.is/1q1iLH>

Middle Peninsula: <https://arcg.is/1XrqmP>

Videos and Dissemination

The Teaser Video and Outreach Video on Working Waterfronts of the Coastal Region can be found via the links below.

Teaser Video: https://youtu.be/DSPYyxb_D4

Outreach Video: https://youtu.be/09N-3D_aiK4

The Teaser Video, Outreach Video, and StoryMaps were disseminated across multiple digital platforms in each region, they can be found via the links below.

Northern Neck

Webpage: <http://www.northernneck.us/workingwaterfronts/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/272370852331/posts/10158004702097332/?sfnsn=mo&d=n&vh=e>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/gonorthernneck/status/1250847086595264515?s=19>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/p/B_DSoWAAb-L/?igshid=1ujyo9b506rrm

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09N-3D_aiK4

Eastern Shore

Webpage: <http://www.a-npdc.org/working-waterfronts/#:~:text=Today%2C%20working%20waterfronts%20on%20the,commercial%20ofishermen%20and%20aquaculture%20businesses.>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/anpdc.org>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/a_npdc

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/anpdc/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kmzlc456LM8>